

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Documents and other items can be delivered electronically
5 from sender to recipient with a level of trustedness approaching or
exceeding that provided by a personal document courier. A trusted
electronic go-between can validate, witness and/or archive
transactions while, in some cases, actively participating in or
directing the transaction. Printed or imaged documents can be
10 marked using handwritten signature images, seal images, electronic
fingerprinting, watermarking, and/or steganography. Electronic
commercial transactions and transmissions take place in a reliable,
"trusted" virtual distribution environment that provides significant
efficiency and cost savings benefits to users in addition to providing
15 an extremely high degree of confidence and trustedness. The systems
and techniques have many uses including but not limited to secure
document delivery, execution of legal documents, and electronic data
interchange (EDI).